



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

## DFPS News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 2, 2016**

### **Ending Elder Abuse is Everyone's Business**

*Is there someone in your neighborhood who needs protection?*

May is Elder Abuse Prevention Month, a time to learn about elder abuse and what you can do to help – because it's everyone's business to help prevent abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of our neighbors who are elderly or have disabilities.

See a [list of events](#) around the state at [EveryonesBusiness.org](#) and please share them with your friends, neighbors, congregations, and co-workers.

Texas Adult Protective Services (APS) is involved in a grass-roots effort, throughout the month, that brings together community, civic, and professional groups to focus attention and resources on preventing and stopping elder abuse. This includes workshops, presentations, caregiver support events, professional networking, and other events that increase understanding and cooperation in addressing the issue.

Last year, Texas Adult Protective Services received seven percent more allegations of abuse, neglect or financial than the previous year, but the total number of validated cases declined by 20 percent. The decline was primarily the result of a new structured approach to casework that APS began using in 2014 that includes new safety and risk assessments.

"We're seeing the benefits of a much more sophisticated approach that helps caseworkers more accurately determine which clients are safe and which ones are at risk of ongoing abuse or neglect," says Beth Engelking, DFPS assistant commissioner for APS. "So now we are able to focus more services on the clients who really need those services."

However, APS cannot deal with this issue alone. Communities must work together to protect vulnerable Texans. There were 43,759 cases of confirmed abuse, neglect, or exploitation last year and the elder population continues to grow. There are approximately 3.2 million people in Texas age 65 or older and another 1.7 million who have a disability and are eligible for APS services.

Self-neglect is a major issue for the elderly as is abuse, neglect, or exploitation by adult children or other family members of the victim.

State law requires anyone who suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation to report it. You can do that by calling the Texas Abuse Hotline at **1-800-252-5400** or report online at [www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org).

Read the [DFPS Annual Report](#) to learn more about Adult Protective Services.

## **APS Facts and Figures<sup>1</sup>**

- [Adult Protective Services](#) (APS) is a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Its mission is to protect adults who are elderly or have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. APS does this by investigating allegations and by providing or arranging for services to alleviate or prevent future maltreatment.
- APS serves Texas residents 65 years or older, and those ages 18 to 64 with a disabling condition.
- There are 3,225,614 Texas residents aged 65 or older and 1,703,522 people with a disability (ages 18-64)
- APS received 110,277 allegations, completed 78,180 investigations, and confirmed abuse, neglect, or exploitation in 43,759 of those cases in fiscal year 2015.
- APS adopted a [new casework practice model](#) called SHIELD on Sept. 1, 2014 that focuses attention on those who need protection the most.
- More information is available in the [2015 Data Book](#) on the DFPS website.

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<sup>1</sup> All statistics are for state fiscal year 2015 (September 1, 2014- August 31, 2015) and are for clients living in at home in their communities.